11630. e. 5
24

THE

WINDSOR STAG:

A POEM,

FOUNDED ON FACT.

IN TWO BOOKS.

"No crime was thine, if 'tis no crime to love." POPE.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR,

AND SOLD BY J. DODSLEY IN PALL-MALL.

M.DCC.LXXVII.

[Price One Shilling and Six Pence.]

WINDSOR STAG:

A POEM,

FOUNDED ON FACT.

IN TWO BOOKS.

"[illegible] was thine, if 'tis no [illegible] to love." Pope.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR.

SOLD BY J. [illegible] IN TALL-MALL.

M.DCC.XLVII.

[Price One Shilling and Six Pence.]

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

HENRY LORD APSLEY,

THIS POEM

(WRITTEN AT HIS LORDSHIP'S COMMAND)

IS HUMBLY DEDICATED

BY

HIS LORDSHIP'S

MOST OBEDIENT

HUMBLE SERVANT,

The AUTHOR.

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

HENRY LORD APSLEY,

THIS POEM

(WRITTEN AT HIS LORDSHIP'S COMMAND)

IS HUMBLY DEDICATED

BY

HIS LORDSHIP'S

MOST OBEDIENT

HUMBLE SERVANT,

The AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

SHOULD this Poem be judged by the regular rules of poetry, there remains no doubt but it will be found extremely deficient: yet ſure ſome allowance may be made for the youth and inexperience of Sixteen! An Etonian's firſt attempt with the Muſes, is not, it is hoped, to be examined with the ſame ſeverity of criticiſm, as a work of maturer underſtanding.

The following ſheets were originally never deſigned for the public eye, but for the amuſement of a few ſelect friends, at whoſe deſire this Poem was written; and whoſe good-nature was kind enough to overlook its numerous faults.----It is now ſubmitted for public examination, by an Author fully ſenſible of its defects. Should

any

any of his friends reap a moment's pleaſure in the peruſal, his utmoſt wiſh is accompliſhed: but ſhould it be condemned by the judicious readers, he muſt, in ſilence, acquieſce in the juſtneſs of his ſentence; and, conſcious of his own inability in poetry, own the force of Horace's remark,

"*Tu nihil invitâ dices facieſve Minervâ.*"

THE

THE

WINDSOR STAG.

BOOK THE FIRST.

*A Stag, whoſe fame has reach'd to royal ears,
A theme thought worthy for the pen of Peers,
Demands my ſong. Come, Muſe! thy bard inſpire!
O lend a youthful votary thy fire!

* In the reign of George the Second, a ſtag of Windſor Foreſt leaped over the park-pales, to get at a favourite cow: the owner by chance found him out, and deſired a neighbouring huntſman to kill him. The huntſman brought his hounds;—but how much was he ſurprized, when he came to the appointed place, to ſee the ſtag lay down before the heifer's feet and die.—The novelty of the accident ſoon ſpread about; and, coming to the ears of the Duke of Cumberland, he deſired a nobleman of his acquaintance to write a copy of verſes on it. This he, in Latin, conciſely performed; and the verſes were preſented to the King. The ſubject, however, ſeeming adapted for a longer performance, induced Lord Apſley to deſire the preſent Author would write the following Poem.

Help

Help him to ſing what —— ſung before,
And teach his vent'rous genius how to ſoar!
APSLEY! to thee the Muſe this verſe ſhall bring;
At thy command I firſt attempt to ſing:
For you firſt dare t'invoke the Muſe's aid.
Pardon the poet you yourſelf have made!
I dare not name your merit in my lays;
I know you'd bluſh to hear Lord APSLEY's praiſe!
Your riſing merit I'll in ſilence view,
Nor ſtrive to pleaſe myſelf by troubling you.
A ſtag, to old Actæon's race ally'd,
The Foreſt's monarch, and all Windſor's pride,
Amid ſubmiſſive herds ſecurely graz'd;
All own'd his proweſs, all his valour prais'd.
His branching antlers ſtruck each hound with awe,
And ſubject herds rever'd his nod as law.
Free-born himſelf, he knew not to oppreſs:
In him the injur'd found a ſure redreſs.

Upright

Upright he rul'd amid fair Windſor's plains,
The pride of ſhepherds and admiring ſwains.
His gen'rous conduct gain'd the wiſh'd-for end,
And man, each creature's foe, became his friend.
No female yet could love's fierce flames impart;
No wanton doe could touch his callous heart;
No tender glances e'er could warm his breaſt;
All-mighty love ne'er ſtole one moment's reſt.
In vain each doe for one kind look would ſue;
That pleaſure, Colly, was reſerv'd for you.
By chance, as o'er the verdant turf he ſtray'd,
A riſing hedge his wand'ring courſe delay'd:
Surpriz'd to find a ſtop, unknown before,
And eager other regions to explore,
Its height he mock'd, the gaping ditch defy'd,
And ſwiftly bounding, gain'd the adverſe ſide.
Here Colly, faireſt of the milky race,
Outſhone each brindled heifer of the place.

Her well-turn'd horns, her gloſſy tender ſkin,
Where-e'er ſhe went, were ſure each heart to win.
No bull could ſtand the magic of her eyes;
Each time ſhe look'd, ſhe gain'd ſome love-ſtruck prize:
Yet coy as fair, ſhe mock'd their inward pain,
And, if they follow'd, friſk'd, and ſought the plain.

When firſt our Stag this tempting fair deſcry'd,
Slumb'ring ſhe lay reclin'd on Thamis' ſide;
A ſpreading oak hung ſhady o'er her head;
Unnumber'd panſies form'd her ſcented bed;
Refreſhing zephyrs fann'd the ruſtling trees,
And ſilver Thamis dimpled with each breeze.
Her ſleeping charms his heart all melting won;
He gaz'd with rapture, ſigh'd, and thus begun:
" Ah me! what tumults in my breaſt ariſe!
" What form is this that ſtrikes my wond'ring eyes?
" It bears a beſtial ſhape; but can ſuch grace
" Befit a beaſt? Some fairy haunts the place.

" Sure

" Sure ſuch a ſhape muſt own ſome heav'nly ſire!
" Some dam once pregnant with cœleſtial fire!
" Theſe charms muſt be the work of Gods above;
" Each limb, each feature, all ſeems form'd for love.
" The taper leg, the ruſtic native grace,
" The ſtar that adds a luſtre to her face,
" The ſnowy whiteneſs that her neck adorns,
" The juſt proportion of her wreathing horns,
" Proclaim her high deſcent. O would ſhe riſe,
" And bleſs with one kind look theſe longing eyes!
" From ſoothing ſleep's ſoft fetters, charmer, break!
" Awake, my fair, Oh eaſe my pain!---awake!"
Colly, when firſt ſhe op'd her brilliant eyes,
Look'd wond'ring on our Stag. He, all ſurpriz'd,
Of utterance bereft, could only gaze,
Loſt in a flood of wonder and amaze.
Half pleas'd, half frighten'd, Colly ſilence broke,
Conceal'd her inward thoughts, and ſternly ſpoke.

" Whence, and what art thou, who with daring feet
" Preſum'ſt to violate my cloſe retreat?
" Begone, or"—" Muſt I leave thee then? ah no!
" Revoke that word," he cry'd, " ah muſt I go?
" Can I ſuch beauty leave, ſuch winning charms?
" I'll ſtay thy ſervant; keep thee from all harms;
" Show thee where daiſies form a fragrant bed;
" With panſies make a pillow for thy head;
" Point out the dark receſs from noon-tide heat,
" The babbling brook, the ſhady cloſe retreat,
" Each verdant meadow, and each moſſy ſeat:
" * For thee each flower that the plain adorns
" I'll pluck, to weave a garland for thy horns.
" Nor think me, fair, unworthy of thy charms;
" Yon foreſt owns the power of my arms:
" O'er num'rous herds with juſt command I reign,
" The potent monarch of yon ample plain.

* Et vos O lauri carpam, et te proxima myrtus. VIRG. Eclog.

" Come

" * Come then, my faireſt! thou ſhalt be our queen,
" The pride, the wonder, of the Windſor Green:
" Submiſſive herds thy orders ſhall obey,
" And diſtant foreſts own thy pow'rful ſway.
" In winter's cold, we'll ſeek ſome warm alcove;
" In ſummer's heat, we'll wander thro' the grove:
" In plenty bleſt, we'll ſpend our happy days;
" In fertile meadows we'll ſecurely graze.
" † The ſweeteſt acorns ſhall thy palate pleaſe,
" And all my ſtudy be to give thee eaſe:
" Each word I utter ſhall my paſſion prove,
" And every action ſhow my unfeign'd love."

Here ceas'd the Stag, and ſtood his doom to hear;
His anxious viſage ſpoke his inward fear.
Her downcaſt eyes, her wiſhing, modeſt look,
Proclaim'd her feelings. Courage then he took,

* Huc ades O formoſe puer. VIRGIL.

† Ipſe ego cana legam tenerâ lanugine mala,
Caſtaneaſque nuces. IDEM.

And

And led her trembling, willing, yet afraid,
Where twining alders form'd a quivering ſhade.
In ſofteſt words he whiſper'd tales of love,
Preſs'd her to make him bleſt as Gods above;
Leer'd with his eyes, breath'd ſhort his am'rous ſtrains,
In broken accents panted forth his pains:
Nearer and nearer to the fair he drew,
Obſerv'd no wand'ring paſſenger in view;
Snatch'd the bleſt moment------But the youthful pen
Obeys the bluſhing Muſe, and veils the ſcene.
Ah, did you know the black decrees of Fate,
Soon, ſoon you'd curſe your now-thought happy ſtate!
For ſee! yon farmer paſſing o'er the green,
With prying eye your am'rous ſport has ſeen:
The morn ſhall ſee the huntſman bring his hounds,
And teach thy lawleſs love its proper bounds.

THE

WINDSOR STAG.

BOOK THE SECOND.

THE riſing ſun now uſher'd in the day;
The whiſtling plowman took his early way;
The eaſtern ſky was purpled o'er with light;
Sol's piercing rays diſpell'd the gloom of night:
With glittering front now Windſor Caſtle ſtood,
And ſhone conſpicuous o'er the gilded wood:
The early lark her tuneful mattins ſung;
The vaulted heavens with her warbling rung:

The feather'd ſongſters chirp'd from ev'ry ſpray,
And ſmiling Nature hail'd the God of day.
Sluggards, ſleep on! each morn let me purſue
My early walk, and bruſh the hoary dew.
With ſome choice friend give me to hail the dawn
Of new-born day; give me to walk the lawn
Beſpangled o'er with dew; to ſeek the flow'ry vale,
And quaff rich cordial from the milk-maid's pail.
Happy, thrice happy, in my morning walk,
In E---e's company, and * A----'s talk!
Hark! o'er yon heath what ſhouts exulting riſe!
Hounds, men, and huntſman, ſeek with greedy eyes
Our Stag's retreat. Firſt Colly heard the noiſe,
As all fatigu'd ſhe lay with nuptial joys.
Alas! what terrors then her mind poſſeſt!
What wild diſtraction ſwell'd her anxious breaſt!

* A young gentleman, remarkable for the vivacity of his converſation, and his frequent ſacrifices to Micrologia, the Goddeſs of ſmall talk.

" Ah me! what ſorrows wait our loves!" ſhe cry'd;
" Was it for this that I became thy bride?
" Rouſe, rouſe, look round! behold thy death in view!
" Death? yes, 'tis death, and only meant for you.
" For you theſe hounds with greedy clamour bark;
" Yon horns ſound forth your knell. O fly!---yet hark!
" Methinks they ſtop---ah no! all hopes are vain!
" Fly, charmer, fly! ſcour rapid o'er the plain.
" Nor gates nor ditches ſhall thy flight impede:
" I'll pray to pitying Gods to give thee ſpeed.
" Away! begone! o'ertop yon riſing gate!----
" Yet muſt we part?---Oh curſed, cruel fate!
" Perhaps I ne'er ſhall ſee my charmer more!
" Perhaps they'll drive thee to ſome deſart ſhore,
" Far, far from Colly! yet preſerve thy life,
" And I am bleſt. Oh ſhun the huntſman's knife!
" Think'ſt thou I'll live when thou ſhalt breathleſs lie?
" No! he that brings thy death ſhall ſee poor Colly die!"

" Oh talk not ſo ; oh pierce not thus my heart !"
Exclaim'd the Stag ; " we muſt not, cannot part!
" To leave thee's death : life without thee is nought!
" Shall I forſake thee?---Hence that coward thought!
" Shall I deſert thee, Colly ? ſhall I fly ?
" By Heav'ns, my fair, 'tis better far to die!
" Say, ſhall I leave thee to th' inſulting foe,
" Unguarded, wretched, ſunk in endleſs woe?
" Leave thee the taunts of mocking boys to prove ?
" Forbid it courage, and forbid it love!
" Here will I ſtand, my death ſerenely wait,
" Nor ſtrive to ſhun the fix'd decrees of Fate.
" 'Tis pleaſure in thy cauſe to yield my breath ;
" To ſave my Colly, thus I brave my death."
Here, as he ſpoke, the hounds appear'd in view ;
He found his fair's prediction but too true :
Certain of death, with honour choſe to fall,
And bold advancing, ſtood confeſt to all.

Each

* Each farmer ſtood ſurpriz'd: on every brow
Pity and wonder ſat. The huntſman now
Beheld the well-known felon. Ev'ry tongue
His praiſe reſounded, and his merit ſung.
" We would it were ſome other," all exclaim'd;
" We never heard before his conduct blam'd:
" Meek as the lamb he graz'd the verdant mead;
" Him oft betimes our daughters us'd to feed:
" Oft have our children deck'd his horns with flowers,
" The joy, the darling of their playful hours.
" Forgive him, farmer, let him go this time;
" Conſider, 'tis his firſt, his only crime."

* The hint of this was taken from the tragedy of Othello; where, when he runs away with Deſdemona, Brabantio ſtating his caſe to the ſenate, without naming the accuſed, they readily promiſed him the ſtricteſt juſtice; but when they find Othello the culprit, with one voice exclaim, " We're very ſorry!" The Author thought he might make uſe of this hint here, as the caſe appears pretty near the ſame: every farmer was ready to exult in the death of the felon, thinking it only a common ſtag; but, when they recollected their old friend, changed from anger to pity.

" Huntſman," exclaim'd the clown, " lead on thy
" hounds!
" I'll teach the felon how t'approach my grounds!
" Soon ſhall he know the pains that guilt await,
" And curſe his hapleſs deſtiny too late."
Soon as the Stag ſaw certain death in view,
" Adieu," he cry'd, " my Colly fair adieu!
" Yet muſt I leave thee!" (here he heav'd a ſigh,
And the big tear down trickled from his eye)
" I muſt. Methinks I hear the knell of fate!
" May guardian angels on my Colly wait!
" May Heav'n preſerve thee from all future harms,
" Save thee from ills, and keep thee from alarms!
" Think that I love thee; for thee dare e'en death;
" And thus, to prove my paſſion, yield my breath!"
He ſaid; the crowd with calm compoſure ey'd;
Caught one laſt look from Colly, groan'd, and dy'd.

AN

ELEGY,

TO THE MEMORY OF

A DEPARTED FRIEND.

HENCE, empty mirth! all conſolation's vain!
For ſuch a loſs what words can balm impart?
Rain on, my tears! in endleſs ſhowers rain;
Sigh on, my breaſt! and burſt, thou ſwelling heart!

And is he dead? is then EUGENIO gone?
Can nought revoke the ſtern command of Death?
Alas! each ſpark, each glimpſe of life is flown,
And cruel Fate has ſnatch'd his lateſt breath.

Chill

Chill are the lips where once perſuaſion hung,
Where eloquence in endleſs tides would flow;
The honey'd words have now forſook that tongue,
Whoſe ſoothing charms could lull e'en frantic woe.

The ſoul that ſympathiz'd another's grief,
And felt a friend's affliction as its own;
Whoſe only pleaſure was to give relief,
And comfort wretchedneſs---that ſoul is flown.

Ye Muſes! weep your hapleſs fav'rite's death:
Sing how he fell in all the pride of youth:
Sing how ſerenely he reſign'd his breath!---
The pride of Science, and the child of Truth!

His ſtrains were ſweet as Philomela's lays;
His verſe, pure "nature to advantage dreſt;"
His nervous diction gain'd poetic bays,
While ev'ry line his gen'rous ſoul expreſt.

In all the pride of youth EUGENIO fell,
As ſome bright flow'r arriv'd at early bloom:
Scarce had his genius ripen'd, ere the knell
Of Fate reſounded, and pronounc'd his doom.

U 7 49

FINIS.

[45]

In all the pride of youth Eugenio fell,
As some bright flow'r arriv'd at early bloom;
Scarce had his genius typified, one line
Of Fame reclaimed, and promoted life's design.

FINIS